Bishop’s University Animal Care Committee (ACC)
Terms of Reference

The Animal Care Committee is charged with setting guidelines, policies and procedures that governs the care and use of animals in research and teaching at the Bishop’s University. Within these Terms of Reference, animals include all vertebrates and cephalopods.

Bishop’s University affirms that the primary responsibility for regulatory compliance rests with the Principal Investigator using the animals in research or for educational purposes.

PURPOSE OF TERMS OF REFERENCE

This document defines and explains the roles of the members of the Animal Care Committee (ACC) in accordance with the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC) guidelines.

The requirements apply to the entire University community, including faculty members (regardless of their contract status - whether continuing, contract, visiting, or adjunct), students, staff, research associates, postdoctoral fellows, and any other relevant personnel. The requirements also apply to all administrative staff responsible for overseeing animal-related research and teaching activities or providing support in these areas. They apply regardless of the funding status of research or teaching endeavors, funding sources, or locations where such research activities are conducted.

The ACC reserves the right to amend the Terms of Reference as needed. Any proposed adjustments, however, must be approved by either the Director of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies or the Vice-Principal of Academics and Research. This approval review process guarantees the committee’s alignment with the institution's academic and research objectives, as well as compliance with regulatory standards.

REPORTING

The ACC and the Office of Research and Graduate Studies report directly to the Vice-Principal Academic and Research at Bishop’s University.

COMPOSITION

Animal Care Committee (ACC) members are appointed for a two-year term, renewable but cannot exceed 8 years for non-ex-officio members.

The membership of the ACC shall include:
1. The Chairperson of the ACC shall be a faculty member appointed by Vice-Principal Academic and Research
2. Veterinarian
3. Community Representative
4. Research Officer or Administrator from the Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ex-officio)
5. Health and Safety Coordinator (ex-officio)
6. Laboratory Technician (Biology) (ex-officio)
7. Educational Farm Member (SAFS)
8. Faculty member whose normal activities do not depend on or involve animal use for research, teaching or testing appointed by the Vice-Principal Academic and Research
9. Graduate Student
10. Student Representative selected by Bishop’s University Student Representative Council
11. Faculty member appointed by the Vice-Principal Academic and Research

It is preferable that the chairperson should be a faculty member who does not use animals in research.

A quorum of six people is required at all times for an ACC meeting to take place and any approvals to be made.

MEETINGS

The ACC meets three times a year (end of January, March, and September), which corresponds to the frequency with which research projects employing vertebrates for educational purposes are submitted. Given the limited number of dossiers to be reviewed each year, this schedule allows the committee to operate efficiently.

If the Educational Farm–Livestock, which is intended to house vertebrate animals, is approved and then established, the ACC will meet more frequently in the first year. The purpose of these more regular meetings is to verify that SOPs are implemented and followed. Following the first year, the ACC is free to determine whether ongoing frequent meetings are required, with the knowledge that the minimum annual meeting frequency cannot be less than four sessions.

AUTHORITY

The ACC has the authority to

a) Access all areas where animals are held or housed (Veterinarians enjoy the same rights)
b) Stop any procedure if an animal is experiencing unnecessary distress or pain;
c) Stop and remove immediately any use of animals which deviates from the approved use, uses any non-approved procedure, or any procedures causing unforeseen distress or pain to animals;
d) Euthanize any animal if in pain or distress if the animal cannot be alleviated
e) Ensure researchers and students hold the appropriate certification, and training before conducting any research or handling animals on the farm
f) Prevent any projects from moving forward until approvals are met.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ACC

The ACC's responsibilities include:

1. Establishing procedures, guidelines, and forms for animal use, care, and biosafety in research and teaching, following CCAC standards.

2. Requiring ACC documentation for any Bishop's University project conducted at another institution, submitted by the parent institution's representative.

3. Receiving a Research Utilizing Animals Report Form from protocol authors by January 15 annually.

4. Allowing protocol authors to request ACC reconsideration of decisions affecting research projects involving animals, with provisions for appeals to the Vice-Principal Academic and Research, who may involve Université de Sherbrooke for impartial review.

5. Periodically or annually reviewing Terms of Reference, security measures, SOPs, and animal care guidelines.

6. Establishing a crisis management program for animal care, aligned with the university's crisis management plan if applicable.

7. Conducting independent peer reviews of scientific merit for research projects, soliciting external reviews if needed.

8. Developing procedures, guidelines, and forms in line with CCAC standards.

9. Ensuring ACC members and animal users are familiar with relevant policies and regulations.

10. Ensuring compliance with CCAC guidelines and federal, provincial, and institutional regulations.

11. Requiring ACC approval for animal use protocols before commencing any activities involving animals.
12. Mandating ACC approval for holding animals for various purposes, except when CCAC guidelines provide exemptions.

13. Encouraging pilot studies before approving large-scale protocols.

14. Mandating completion of animal utilization forms by users and providing appropriate SOPs.

15. Requiring ACC approval for all procedures on Bishop's campus, even if involving other institutions, with the right to reject if not meeting CCAC guidelines.

16. Reviewing and assessing animal use protocols, emphasizing CCAC policies, and requesting further information when necessary.

17. Ensuring that all procedures align with CCAC guidelines, with scientific justifications for variations.

18. Approving annual renewals and minor amendments to protocols and categorizing amendments as major or minor.

19. Requiring users to report unanticipated problems and steps taken to address them to the ACC.

20. Ensuring proper animal care, including veterinary services, site visits and delegating authority to veterinarians.

21. Establishing procedures to avoid unnecessary pain or distress, use of anesthesia/analgesia, post-operative care, and animal welfare.

22. Ensuring users comply with regulations and veterinarian standards at other institutions.

23. Ensuring training and qualifications of animal users and personnel, and conducting peer reviews.

24. Conducting post-approval monitoring and reporting findings to the ACC.

25. Maintaining liaison with CCAC Secretariat and relevant authorities.

26. Submitting annual animal use information to CCAC and providing pre-assessment documentation for site visits.

27. Organizing with SAFS seminars and workshops on animal use in science and ethics especially for the Educational Farm with livestock.

29. Encouraging communication with animal welfare organizations.

**RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND GRADUATE STUDIES**

The Office of Research and Graduate Studies (ORGS) is committed to assisting the ACC, by convening meetings, managing agendas and writing meetings minutes. It is also responsible for keeping all documentation up to date and revising it as necessary. The ORGS plays a key role in reviewing files submitted via Romeo, producing recommendations as well and as providing information on procedural matters. Where necessary, the ORGS has the right to pause standard operating procedures (SOPs) and report any relevant issues to the Vice-Principal Academic and Research.

**TRAINING FOR ANIMAL CARE COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

According to the CCAC guidelines and policies, Bishop's University should ensure that ACC members get training relevant to the operation of the Animal Care and Use program. The Office of the Vice-Principal Academic and Research will cover the costs of two ACC members and the Research Officer attending the annual CCAC national workshop, as well as continuing education webinars. In addition, the Research Officer will remain in contact with the Canadian Animal Ethics Coordinators Listserv in order to collaborate and find answers to ACC queries.

Since the ACC is in charge of protocol management, it needs to make arrangements with the ORGS to receive Romeo system training. In regards to protocol application training, the ACC can draw on the numerous resources made available by the CCAC, as well as develop relationships with other CCAC-certified institutions.

CCAC guidelines The Animal Care Committee and the Role of Its Members (ccac.ca) should be consulted by the committee at all times.

**RESOURCE UTILIZATION**

The ACC is able to seek assistance both inside and externally from individuals with the requisite expertise in animal care and use. In addition, the Office of Research and Graduate Studies has access to the network of Canadian animal ethics coordinators, which helps to expand the committee’s knowledge base.

**ACC EXPECTATION OF SITE VISIT**

Following the approval and establishment of the Educational Farm with livestock, site visits will be required at least twice a year during the initial year. Subsequently, if no significant changes are necessary, these site visits can become annual.

During these site visits, the ACC is required to complete a Site Visit Form issued by the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC). However, it should be noted that this form can be tailored to the specific needs and circumstances of the institution.
Given that outdoor sites may convey unique considerations not covered by the standard CCAC form, various modifications become essential. While items such as temperature and humidity management may not be applicable in an outdoor setting, the ACC is responsible for adding relevant parameters. These may include, but are not limited to, provisions for protection from inclement weather, predator control measures, and accommodations for winter conditions, such as the use of heating lamps, as appropriate.

For further guidance and details, please refer to the "Guidance for ACC Members Conducting Annual Site Visits" document, accessible at CCAC Guidance Document.

In addition, the veterinarian must conduct two independent site visits and submit a formal report to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies.

All documentation from Site Visits must be sent to the Office of Research and Graduate Studies for review and archival.

MECHANISM FOR ANIMAL MORTALITY REPORTING and INCIDENT

The CCAC requires researchers to disclose any animal mortality within the required 14-day period rather than during the annual reporting onto Romeo. To this end, a form is available via the research webpage and the Romeo Portal. CCAC - Canadian Council on Animal Care: Reportable Animal Welfare Incidents.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

All SOPs will be reviewed every three years and readjusted annually if necessary.

ANNUAL ANIMAL DATA

The data numbers have to be submitted by March 31st every year.

ANIMAL USER TRAINING CERTIFICATION

The ACC benefits from its relationship with two other CCAC-certified institutions to deliver the theoretical training aligned with the CCAC requirements. All information is found on Research with Animals - Bishop’s University (ubishops.ca).

ANNUAL ONLINE REVIEW: RESEARCH PAGE

The ACC is responsible for review and disseminated information onto the Research Page of the Bishop’s University website. Annual review is requested to maintain the information up-to-date and relevant to the CCAC. Research with Animals - Bishop's University (ubishops.ca).
SUCCESSION PLAN

Three months prior to the end of their two-year tenure, the Chairperson will inquire whether any ACC member is interested in taking over. Alternatively, if the Chairperson wishes to continue in the role, they may announce their intent to the ACC. The decision on whether or not to renew their mandate will be taken by the VPAR in consultation with the ACC. In the event that the Chairperson is unable to fulfill their term at any point, either the VPAR, or the Director of Research and Graduate Studies will act as chair.

UPDATES TO TERMS OF REFERENCE

The ACC will review these terms and reference every 3 years to comply with CCAC guidelines, policies or other relevant changes in animals at Bishop’s University. The ACC has the authority to review and amend the Terms of Reference at any time. However, any changes must be approved by the Director of the Office of Research and Graduate Studies or the Vice-Principal of Academics and Research.